

1.

Notes on the Taxonomy of the Birds of Malaysia.

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In the preparation of a handbook of the birds of Malaysia, I have naturally used as a basis "A handlist of Malaysian Birds" by F. N. Chasen (*Bull. Raffles Museum*, Singapore, No. 11, December, 1935), an excellent and most reliable work. But a number of additions have been made, and new facts have been brought to light since its publication. Furthermore, considerable changes have taken place in the nomenclature, mostly as a result of several revisions of families or smaller groups recently conducted by E. Mayr, D. Amadon, H. G. Deignan, S. D. Ripley, C. Vaurie, and myself. All these alterations of Chasen's nomenclature have been incorporated in the forthcoming handbook. I thought it useful to point out the most important of them in the present paper. A bibliography of the Malaysian Avifauna since 1935 will be found at the end of these notes. In most cases, no attempt has been made to revise subspecies, for lack of time. Reasons for their adoption, rejection or addition are not discussed unless they prove of special interest. The same applies to extension or modification in ranges. Particularly the reader is referred to "Notes on the Taxonomy of the Birds of the Philippines" by Jean Delacour and Ernst Mayr, *Zoologica*, 30 (12), November 15, 1945, pp. 105-117, for all changes applying equally well to Malaysian birds, as they will not be discussed here again.

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Grebes (Podicipidae).

Podiceps novae-hollandiae javanicus has been added to the list. Found in Java. Mayr has discussed the distribution of *novae-hollandiae* and *ruficollis* (*Emu*, 43, 1943, pp. 3-7; 44, 1945, pp. 231-233).

Ducks (Anatidae).

The Australian pochard (*Aythya australis*) has been found in Java, where it seems to be a rare resident in the eastern part of the island (Hiang Plateau). Mayr (*Amer. Mus. Novit.* No. 1056, p. 7, 1940)

has shown that the proposed race *lebeboeri* (Bartels and Frank, *Treubia*, 16, p. 337, 1938) is not acceptable. The Javan specimens belong to the nominate race.

Game Birds (Phasianidae).

I do not consider that all Malaysian forms of *Arborophila*, except *charltoni* and races, can be considered subspecies of *brunneopectus* (= *javanica*), as proposed by Chasen. Differences in pattern and general coloration are too great. The Malaysian group form a superspecies which can be listed as follows: *A. brunneopectus: campbelli, rolli, sumatrana, orientalis*; *A. javanica: javanica, bartelsi*; *A. hyperhythra (erythrophrys* is but a color phase).

In the general study of the kalij and fire-back pheasants which I have recently effected in the preparation of a new monograph, I have been compelled to admit that no natural generic divisions exist among these birds. Characters such as the general color pattern, the shape of the crest or its absence in one or both sexes, the shape and development of the tail feathers, do not show sufficient consistency for clear distinctions. The species *inornatus*, *imperialis* and *edwardsi* are providing links between the different groups to such a degree that no satisfactory divisions can stand. Therefore the generic names *Gennaeus*, *Hierophasis*, *Delacourigallus*, *Houppifer*, *Chalcocomus* and *Diardigallus* are synonyms of *Lophura*, the oldest in date.

Although the species *calchurum* is very distinct in shape, display and voice, it cannot be separated from other *Polyplectron*, as *inopinatum* supplies a perfect intermediate.

Pigeons (Columbidae).

Mayr ("The Birds of Timor and Sumba," *Bull. A. M. N. H.*, 83 (2), 1944, pp. 147-148) has pointed out that the subspecies *Ducula aenea aenea* occurs only in the Lesser Sunda Islands, being larger, more vinaceous than the Malaysian population. The oldest name available for the latter is *consobrina* (Salvadori, 1887, Nias).

Cuckoos (Cuculidae).

We have shown (*Zoologica*, 30 (12), p. 107) that the generic names *Rhopodytes*,

Rhinortha and *Zanclostomus* are synonyms of *Phoenicophaeus*. It follows that *P. curvirostris borneensis* (Blasius and Nehrkorn, 1881) is antedated by *P. diardi borneensis* (Salvadori, 1874). It must therefore be known as *P. c. microrhinus* (Berlepsch, 1895).

Hornbills (Bucerotidae).

Two very similar pied hornbills are found in India and Ceylon: *coronatus* in the south and west and *malabaricus* in the northeast. Both coexist in part of their range (Chota Nagpore and western Bengal) and therefore must be considered two different species. There is a great deal of difference in the shape of the casque, which is narrow, compressed, with flat sides in *coronatus*; broad, swollen and convex on the sides in *malabaricus*. Furthermore, in *coronatus* there is one large black patch on the bill, located on the terminal two-thirds of the casque, including the whole ridge. In *malabaricus*, there are two black patches, one on each side of the casque, leaving out the ridge which is always pure white; they are roughly triangular, extending from the tip of the casque downward to about one-half of the bill and encroaching on the sides of the mandible itself. In *coronatus*, all the lateral tail feathers are white, the central pair alone being black. In *malabaricus*, the lateral feathers are black, with only the terminal quarter white. Farther east, a subspecies of *malabaricus* (*leucogaster*) ranges as far south as Perak in Malaya. Southern Malaya, Sumatra, Borneo and islands are the home of *convexus*, which again has the lateral tail feathers entirely white, as in *coronatus*. All the same, *convexus* is a subspecies of *malabaricus*, not of *coronatus*, as the casque is of identical shape and pattern. This characteristic is much more important than the variation in the color of the tail feathers. As it could be expected from the geographical distribution of these hornbills, the similarity of *coronatus* and *convexus* in this particular point can only be interpreted as a result of convergence, without any phyletic significance.

Barbets (Capitonidae).

The barbets have been revised recently by Ripley (*Auk*, 62, 1945, pp. 542-563). His general conclusions have been adopted, with the following exceptions:

I consider *Megalaema armillaris* (+ *baliensis*), *M. henrici* (+ *brachyrhyncha*), and *M. pulcherrima* as three different species, forming a superspecies, as the differences in pattern are too great, in my opinion, to warrant specific lumping. *M. eximia* (+ *cyanea*) is so different in pattern, coloration and size of rictal bristles from *M. australis* (+ *duvauceli* and races) that they should be considered as two distinct and not very closely related species.

Woodpeckers (Picidae).

The generic names *Callolophus* and *Chrysophlegma* are considered synonyms of *Picus*, no sufficiently important characteristics being found in the different species to warrant generic splitting.

The Malaysian pigmy woodpeckers of the genus *Dendrocopos*¹ belong to two distinct species: *canicapillus* (gray-headed) and *moluccensis* (brown-headed), which coexist in numerous localities. (See Greenway, *Auk*, 60, 1943, pp. 564-574). The Philippine forms belong to a different species: *maculatus*. The three species are very similar, but can be fairly easily distinguished.

The two three-toed species, *javanense* and *rafflesi*, are certainly to be regarded as congeneric, as they have very similar pattern and colors, the differences in the bill (culmen straighter and more angulate, and base covered by short plumes in *rafflesi*) being of specific significance only. Therefore *Chloropicoides* (1847) becomes a synonym of *Dinopium* (1814). It follows that *D. rafflesi borneonensis* (Hesse, 1911) is antedated by *D. javanense borneonensis* (Dubois, 1897). I propose to name it:

Dinopium rafflesi dulitense

nom. nov. for *Gauropicoides rafflesi borneonensis*, Hesse, Orn. Monatsber. 19, 1911, p. 192: Mt. Dulit, North Sarawak, Borneo.

Pittas (Pittidae).

I consider *Pitta schneideri* as a full species, as it is too different in colors from *P. nipalensis*, in both sexes and at different ages. *P. venusta* and *P. ussheri*, both with the crown black, are considered subspecies of the red-crowned *P. granatina* (+ *coccinea*) as none of the forms appear to overlap. *Venusta* inhabits western Sumatra; *coccinea*, Malaya and northwestern Sumatra; *ussheri*, northwestern Borneo; *granatina*, northeastern and southern Borneo. Stresemann (*Temminckia*, 3, 1938, Leiden, pp. 124-125) mentions intermediates in adjoining areas of distribution in Borneo.

Cuckoo-Shrikes (Campephagidae).

In examining the numerous species so far distributed among the "genera" *Coquus*, *Pteropodocys*, *Coracina*, *Volvocivora*, *Edolisoma*, I fail to see how they can be divided according to any important and stable groups of characteristics. Difference in the size and proportions of the body, bill, wings and tail, or in color pattern, are combined in all sorts of ways, none being of any great significance. It is therefore advisable to include them all in the genus *Coracina*.

On the other hand, the genus *Lalage* is quite distinct, if restricted to the slender species *nigra*, *sueuri*, *melanoleuca*, *leuco-*

¹ *Dendrocopos* Koch, 1816, replaces *Dryobates* Boie, 1826. Not antedated by *Dendrocopus* Vieillot, 1816.

pygia, *aurea*, *atrovirens*, *leucomela*, *maculosa* and *sharpei*. The genera *Campephaga*, *Chlamydochera*, *Campochera*, *Pericrocotus*, *Hemipus* and *Tephrodornis* complete the family.

Leafbirds (Aegithinidae).

Aethorhynchus is a synonym of *Aegithina*. The only species assigned to it, *lafresnayeii*, is but a larger edition of *Aegithina tiphia*, with a longer bill. Both species have the same color pattern, and both have two moults in the year, the male assuming a breeding plumage for the mating season. They are obviously so closely related that a generic distinction between them appears to be absurd.

Bulbuls (Pycnonotidae).

A new arrangement of the subspecies of crested bulbuls of the genus *Criniger* has been adopted. It is a little different from that previously proposed in my "Revision of the Genera and Species of the Family Pycnonotidae" (*Zoologica*, 28 (4), 1943, p. 26), and very similar to that recently proposed by H. G. Deignan (*The Birds of Northern Thailand*, U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 186, 1945, p. 338).

It now seems to me that these puzzling bulbuls, all very similar, can be divided into two species:

1. *Criniger tephrogenys*—Crest and tail relatively short. Living at lower altitudes in the southern part of the range, where both species coexist. It includes the following subspecies: *xanthizurus*, *balicus*, *frater*, *gutturalis*, *tephrogenys*, *robinsoni*.

2. *Criniger ochraceus*—Crest and tail relatively long, living at higher altitudes in the southern part of the range, with the following subspecies: *flaveolus*, *burmanicus*, *griseiceps*, *pallidus*, *henrici*, *annamensis*, *ochraceus*, *cambodianus*, *sacculatus*, *sumatranus*, *ruficrissus*.

In both groups we find birds with bright yellow, dirty yellow and pale brown underparts, and many intermediates. The extent and intensity of the yellow pigment is only of subspecific significance.

Old World Insect-eaters (Muscicapidae).

I. ROBINS, CHATS AND THRUSHES (TURDINAE).

Like *Kittacincla*, *Trichixos* Lesson, 1839, is a synonym of *Copsychus* (see "Notes on the Taxonomy of the Birds of the Philippines," *Zoologica* 30 (12), 1945, p. 112). The unique species *pyrropygus* is very close to *sularis* in shape, and to *malabaricus* in habits and voice.

The new name *ater* proposed in the same paper for *Copsychus saularis niger* (Sharpe) is unnecessary, as there is an older name available for the subspecies, so far overlooked: *Copsychus adamsi* Elliott, *Auk*, VII,

1890, p. 348. In a further note, *Auk*, VIII, 1891, p. 117, Elliott recognizes that *adamsi* is a synonym of *niger*.

II. BABBLERS (TIMALIINAE).

The heterogeneous medley of species variously assigned to the babbler group since the beginning of the last century have been a puzzle to ornithologists until the present days. For many years the present writer has studied them extensively in museums, in captivity and in nature, having observed and collected many different forms in French Indo-China, the richest country in the Orient as far as these birds are concerned. During the last few years, Mayr and I have been preparing a detailed study of the Timaliinae which we hope to have published shortly.

I only want to give here a brief and tentative survey of the principal results and their repercussion on the nomenclature of Malaysian Timaliinae. We have found that there are five distinct groups, or tribes, with or without links between themselves or with the other subfamilies of insect-eaters:

A. Ground babblers (Cinchlosomatini) inhabiting the Australian Region, only one reaching Malaysia (*Eupetes*); a primitive tribe.

B. Jungle babblers (Pellorneini) including the following Malaysian genera and species: *Pellorneum*: *ruficeps*, *capistratum*; *Malacocincla*: *tickelli*, *pyrrhogenys*, *malacensis*, *cinereiceps*, *rostrata*, *bicolor*, *sepiaria*, *abboti*; *Malacopteron*: *magnum*, *cinereum*, *magnirostre*, *affine*, *albugulare*.

The generic names *Aethostoma*, *Anuroptis* and *Erythrocichla* are considered synonyms of *Malacocincla*. The species *tickelli* belong to that genus, not to *Pellorneum*. *M. vanderbilti* is probably an altitudinal race of *sepiaria*. Examination of available series shows that the birds named *Elocincla aenigma* by Riley are identical with those named *rufiventris* by Salvadori. As they agree with the description of the mysterious *perspicillata* Bonaparte, this last name must be used.

Ophrydornis is a synonym of *Malacopteron*.

Through *Pellorneum*, on the one hand, and such birds as *Megarulurus mariei*, *bivittata* (New Caledonia and Timor) and *Ortygocichla rubiginosa* (New Britain), and *Bradypterus*, on the other, this tribe is connected with the Sylviinae.

C. Scimitar and wren babblers (Pomatorhinini), forming a separate tribe with little connection with any others. The Malaysian representatives are: *Pomatorhinus*: *montanus*, *hypoleucos*; *Rimator*: *malacoptilus*; *Ptilocichla*: *leucogrammica*, *falcata*; *Kenopia*: *striata*; *Turdinus*: *marmoratus*, *macroactylus*, *brevicaudatus*, *epilepidotus*; *Pnoepyga*: *pusilla*.

Napothera is considered a synonym of *Turdinus*, as *brevicaudatus* differs from *macroactylus* by the size only, the different races of both species showing a strikingly similar variation. Contrary to R. M. de Schauensee's opinion (*Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci.*, Philadelphia, 1940, 91, pp. 352-354), I believe that all the forms of the smaller *Turdinus* can be referred to the one species *epilepidotus*, those found in the same area being altitudinal races, not really coexisting anywhere.

The Annamese genus *Jabouilleia* provides a perfect link between *Pomatorhinus* and *Rimotor*.

D. Tit babblers (Timaliini). A large tribe, perhaps connected with the titmice (Paridae) through the so-called longtailed tits (*Aegithalos*, *Psaltia*, *Psaltiriparus*), the parrotbills (*Paradoxornis*), the reedlings (*Panurus*), the American wren tits (*Chamaea*), the oriental genera *Moupinia*, *Chrysomma*, *Dumetia* and *Timalia*.

The following occur in Malaysia: *Macronus*: *flavicollis*, *gularis*, *ptilosus*; *Stachyris*: *nigricaps*, *poliocephala*, *grammiceps*, *nigricollis*, *leucotis*, *maculata*, *striolata*, *thoracica*, *erythroptera*, *rufifrons*, *chrysaea*, *melanothorax*; *Timalia*: *pileata*; *Psaltia*: *exilis*.

The genus *Cyanodermā* is considered a synonym of *Stachyris*, as the presence, extent or absence of the naked skin behind the eye vary throughout the whole group in a way which is not consistent with other characteristics.

E. Song babblers (Turdoidini). The most differentiated tribe, which appears to be connected with the jungle babblers through *Gampsorhynchus* and *Malacopteron*, and also perhaps to the wren babblers through *Turdoides* (including *Argya*) and *Pomatorhinus*. They are numerous in Malaysia, but the Himalaya-Indo-China country is their stronghold: *Garrulax*: *lugubris*, *palliatas*, *rufifrons*, *leucolophus*, *mitratus*, *erythrocephalus*; *Leiothrix*: *argentea*; *Cutia*: *nipalensis*; *Pteruthius*: *erythropterus*, *melanotis*, *aenobarbus*; *Alcippe*: *castaneiceps*, *nipalensis*, *pyrrhoptera*; *Siva*: *strigula*, *cyanuroptera*, *castaneiceps*; *Yuhina*: *xantholeuca*; *Gampsorhynchus*: *rufulus*; *Crocias*: *guttatus*; *Heterophasia*: *picaoides*.

Melanocichla and *Rhopocichla* are obviously generic synonyms of *Garrulax*. We also consider *Mesia* a synonym of *Leiothrix*, and *Erpornis* of *Yuhina*.

There has been in the past some confusion between the small species of *Pteruthius*; *tahanensis*, from Malaya, is a subspecies of *melanotis*, not of *aenobarbus*, the nominate form of which inhabits Java.

III. FLYCATCHERS (MUSCICAPINAE).

The reasons for lumping several genera of flycatchers into the genus *Muscicapa* have

been previously given (*Zoologica*, 30 (12), p. 113). The genus *Niltava* must be added to the synonymy of *Muscicapa*, as no clear line can be drawn between the various forms with and without blue patches on the neck of the females. Generic distinction between such species as *sundara*, *davidi*, *vivida*, *cyanomelana*, *concreta*, etc., is unsound. *Oreicola* is also a synonym of *Muscicapa*. *Drymophila* is apparently a monarch flycatcher, related to *Terpsiphone* and to *Monarcha*.

Flowerpeckers (Dicaeidae).

The group of flowerpeckers (*Dicaeum*) with dark metallic upperparts and partly red underparts, found from S. E. Asia to Australia, is puzzling. One would be tempted to regard them all as geographical subspecies, but two forms coexist in certain places, such as Timor (*maugei maugei* and *sanguinolentum hanieli*). When carefully examined, they are really more different than they appear to be at first sight.

It seems, therefore, necessary to maintain several species. In Malaysia, I consider that *monticola* (bluish above), *sanguinolentum* (purplish), and *ignipectus* (greenish) are separate species; *beccarii*, with no red on the breast, is a race of *ignipectus*, close to *camboianum* from Indo-China.

Dicaeum agile sumatranum (*Piprisoma modestum sumatranum* Chasen, *Treubia*, 17, afl. 2, 1939, p. 184; Pendeng, Atjeh, N. Sumatra) is antedated by *Dicaeum cruentatum sumatranum* Cabanis, *Journ. f. Orn.*, 1878, p. 101, Sumatra. I propose for it the new name of:

Dicaeum agile atjehense

All the races of thick-billed gray flowerpeckers belong to the species *agile*; I agree with Deignan (*Birds of Northern Thailand*, pp. 550-551) in this point, and also in referring the Malayan population to the subspecies *modestum*, described after specimens from southern Tenasserim.

White-eyes (Zosteropidae).

The species *javanica* and *squamifrons* are so different from other *Zosterops*, all very similar in a general way, that it seems better to refer them to the genus *Apoia*, the type of which is *A. goodfellowi*, from Mindanao.

Finches (Fringillidae).

The species *estherae* is certainly not referable to the genus *Serinus*, but to *Carduelis*, its nearest relative being *C. (= Hypocanthus) monguilloti* from the mountains of southern Annam.

Drongos (Dicruridae).

This isolated family is now in the course of revision by Dr. C. Vaurie. Dr. Mayr and I are in accord with him in recognizing only two genera of drongos, for the 18 species of

that family: *Dissemurus*, for the species with the external rectrices greatly elongated, the long bare shafts terminated into a spatula; and *Dicrurus*, for all the other species with a more normal tail. *Bhringa* becomes a synonym of *Dissemurus*, and *Chaptia* of *Dicrurus*.

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2.

A New Name for a Philippine Flowerpecker.

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Dicaeum hypoleucum pontifex Mayr.

New name for *Dicaeum everetti* Tweeddale, 1877 (late), *Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist.*, (4) XX, p. 537, not *Prionochilus everetti* Sharpe, 1877 (early), *Ibis*, p. 16. As stated previously (Delacour and Mayr, 1945, Notes on the Taxonomy of the Birds of the Philippines, *Zoologica*, 30 (12), 1945, p. 114) there

is no reason for excluding the species *agile* (of which *P. everetti* Sharpe is a subspecies) from the genus *Dicaeum*. *Dicaeum hypoleucum pontifex* Mayr is exactly intermediate between *obscurum* (Luzon) and *hypoleucum* (Sulu-Mindanao). It resembles *obscurum* in the color of the upperparts, but differs by the whitish gray underparts and the dark brown legs.